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Production and Marketing Administration
State College, New Mexico

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NEW MEXICO

WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

6-3-49
NO. 348

ACP PRACTICE AIMED AT SOIL BLOWING - Greeley County, Kansas, is in the heart of the "blow" area of the Great Plains wheat country. It has experienced the tragic effects of soil blowing and it has known the thrill of "coming back" after apparent abandonment.

Having in mind what the wind can do to unprotected land in dry years, the county Agricultural Conservation Committee is stressing protective conservation practices. The following is from a committee letter to all Greeley County farmers:

"In order to break up the large areas of (plowed) land, assistance will not be given for protected summer fallow where the wheat strips are more than 80 rods wide.

.....

"If operators have solid quarter sections of wheat now and wish to seed some back for continuous crop this fall, they are not to destroy more than 80 rods of stubble in one body..... Operators here who have consistently followed a program of half summer fallow and half crop will tell you that over a period of years they will raise more crop on half their land seeded in summer fallow than they will raise on all of it in continuous crops. Even in abnormally dry years, crops can be raised on good summer fallow. It is our aim to get more good, well protected summer fallow, and have the stubble left on the land that is in crop for harvest in 1949 and in years following for protection to adjacent summer fallow land. When the ground is very dry, and we have a lot of wind, it is difficult to hold soil in 80 rod strips, but if it has protection on both sides it is possible to hold it. When the wind can get a swing at a solid quarter, half section or section of open ground, it takes constant working and then it is almost impossible to hold the soil."

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MORE FALL PIGS MAY BE AHEAD - The springtime hog-corn ratio this year could mean one of the largest annual pig crops on record if farmers follow the "average" response pattern of recent years, according to a report by the Department of Agriculture.

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As yet, there are no means of indicating whether this response will actually occur, the report points out. Price ratios are not always true signposts to future hog production. Last year, for instance, the springtime corn-hog ratio was unfavorable for hog production because of the small 1947 corn crop, but brighter crop prospects during the summer helped increase the number of sows farrowing in the fall.

Neither is the spring hog-corn price ratio a reliable guide to future profits from hog production. The ratio as of a particular time is determined mainly by other existing market forces and it can change greatly by the time hogs from the next pig crop are raised, fattened, and marketed.

Moreover, this year, changes in hog production and prices -- as well as any changes in consumer demand for meat -- are more likely to influence the future profits from hogs than are changes in the price of corn. This is opposite to the general rule, because corn supplies and prices usually vary from year to year more than hog production and prices. Carry-over stocks of corn this year, however, will be large enough so that market prices could not rise greatly unless the 1949 corn crop were small.

Projecting the pattern into current figures gives these results:

In mid-March, says the Department report, the average hog-corn price ratio was 16.9, the second highest for that month in 23 years. The springtime average will probably be somewhat lower, but still favorable for hog producers.

With an average producer response to this ratio, around 5.8 million sows would farrow this fall and an average 37 million fall pigs be raised. Intentions of last December indicated a 1949 spring pig crop of 56.5 millions, which would bring the total 1949 pig crop to 93.5 million or more.

This would be almost 10 percent more than the 1948 crop, 11 percent more than the number saved in 1947, and the third largest crop on record. It would be equivalent to an annual hog slaughter in the year beginning October 1949 of 82 or 83 million head.

AGRICULTURE SUPPORTS MOST OF WORLD'S PEOPLE - Two-thirds of the world's people depend on agriculture for their livelihood, according to a recent statement by Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan. In the under-developed countries, the percentage is still higher, and most of the world's people do not have enough to eat. Wooden plows and human hands remain the basic agricultural tools in many countries.

"Obviously, agriculture must loom large in any effort to aid the under-developed areas of the world," the Secretary said. "This involves helping them increase not only the production of the crops needed by their own people but also the commodities for export by which they acquire needed foreign exchange. In Latin America, the United States Department of Agriculture has already had more than a decade of active experience in helping other countries improve their agriculture."

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FARM BRIEFS - In 1947, around 2-1/4 million farms produced less than \$1,500 worth of commodities for sale and home use.

Two-thirds of farm dwellings do not have running water, while only 4.5 percent of city dwellings are without it, Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan said recently. A combination of modern facilities -- electric lights, running water, bath and flush toilet -- is found in 83 percent of city dwellings but not more than 20 percent of farm dwellings.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

6-17-49
NO. 350

USDA ANNOUNCES GRAIN STORAGE PROGRAM

"Distress" loans on wheat stored in temporary ways, loans for construction of farm storage, and emergency purchase of bins by the Commodity Credit Corporation are all parts of the Government's recently announced program to develop more adequate storage for farm commodities. Details of the plan were released upon the enactment into law of the bill restoring CCC's authority to help farmers store grain and other products.

Highlights of the program as summarized by W. Leslie Martin, chairman of the New Mexico Production and Marketing Administration Committee, are:

1. The grain loan program will be liberalized through the immediate granting of "distress" loans to farmers in all areas where the climate permits storage of wheat for short periods on the ground in the open, or in other temporary ways. These distress loans, at 75 percent of the full support level, will later be converted into a regular loan when the farmer builds or acquires approved farm storage which must be within 90 days. The farmer will receive the balance of the full price-support loan (90 percent of parity) when the grain is in his new storage.

2. Where wheat may not be left in the open or in other temporary storage and adequate storage is not available to farmers, CCC will undertake to find suitable emergency storage, such as Government-owned war-surplus facilities, thus enabling farmers to take advantage of the distress loan program.

Farmers should check with their local County Agricultural Conservation Committee before taking steps to qualify under the distress loan program.

3. CCC will make loans to farmers for the purchase or construction of farm storage to the extent of 85 percent of the cost. Loans will be payable in five annual installments or earlier at the farmer's option.

4. Manufacturers and suppliers of on-the-farm type of grain storage will meet with Department of Agriculture officials to help pave the way for early delivery to farmers of the largest possible amount of storage and storage materials.

5. When other storage is not available, CCC will contract for bins for storage of CCC-owned or -controlled grain stocks, thus helping farmers, grain dealers, and the railroads to handle the volumes of grain coming in at the peak of harvest. This is regarded as a temporary measure to supplement existing storage only as necessary to meet urgent current needs. The bins will be placed on leased or purchased sites at strategic points throughout the country; when not needed by CCC, the bins will be subject to lease by farmers or groups of farmers.

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ACREAGE ADJUSTMENTS FOR 1950 - More protein and less starch is the food production pattern shaping up in the U. S. Department of Agriculture crop adjustment program for 1950, according to W. Leslie Martin, Chairman of the New Mexico Production and Marketing Administration Committee.

He points out that with huge crops of wheat and corn in prospect for 1949 and with the warehouses filled with cotton, there is a need to shift some 30 million acres from the production of these and similar crops. If this acreage is used for the Production of barley, oats or grain sorghums or commercial vegetables, it will only add to the surpluses in these crops. To avoid trouble, about the only use for most of this land is to put it into grass and legumes.

This will mean putting some of the land that was plowed out of grass back into grass. Sod was broken to meet demands of war and post-war famine conditions in Europe but now there is a need to get some of this land back into sod. More grass and legumes are needed in corn and cotton rotations.

There is a need for increased production of livestock products but the bins and cribs and warehouses are full of corn, cotton and wheat. This obviously should indicate the adjustment in farming that is needed. But to accomplish such an adjustment in an orderly and equitable manner, the chairman points out, it may be necessary to have such things as acreage allotments and marketing quotas. Then, through the Agricultural Conservation Program assistance is provided to aid farmers in making the shift from the cash - one-season-return- crops to the slower return type of livestock farming.

For this reason Mr. Martin says emphasis this year is on the harvesting of as much grass and legume seed as possible. This seed, he points out, is the key to the shift from "surplus" crops to livestock. And, since grass and legumes are among the best means of conserving soil -- protecting it from erosion and building up reserves of humus and fertility for future needs -- this seed is also the key to conservation. Instead of wasting the soil in producing unwanted surpluses, the land will then become a reservoir for use when added strength and fertility are needed to produce food for an expanding population.

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ACP -- SYMBOL OF BETTER LIVING - "We can't have more people eating more food if a third of the farmers go broke every few years. We live better when farmers are producing abundantly. And farmers produce abundantly when their land and prices are protected from depletion and depression."

Addressing the elected farmer Agricultural Conservation Committeemen in Georgia recently, Alvin V. McCormack, Conservation Branch Director of the Production and Marketing Administration, emphasized the close relationship between how well farmers are able to farm and how well people are able to eat.

He pointed out that the Agricultural Conservation Program is not limited to soil and water conservation alone but to conservation of the farmer as well as the farm.

"Our problem is one of producing enough food and fiber for the 148 million people in this country and what we can export -- and to keep on doing it. To produce enough now and at the same time take care of our land so that it will produce enough when there are 170 or 180 million people in this country."

And he added, "Under the conservation phase of ACP, the country cooperates with farmers and shares the cost of carrying out conservation practices which maintain and improve the productivity of the land. Under the price support phase of the farm program, the country shares with the farmer the risk of abundance. The price

supports give the farmer the assurance that he won't go broke producing too much and allotments and marketing quotas protect the country against supporting the price on too much."

"The whole program works out to a better living for people -- not just the farmers but for the people in town. It means more food and more other farm commodities -- for more people."

It is when farm prices get out of balance with non-farm prices -- way below parity -- that the land goes to pieces, he pointed out. Then farmers haven't the money to buy fertilizers, even with government assistance. They have to mine the soil to squeeze every penny out of it to meet taxes and minimum operating expenses.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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WEEKLY RANGING PROGRAM NEWS

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NO. 351

GRAZING LAND MANAGEMENT - Maximum use of our range land on a sustained yield basis is the aim of the grazing land management practice under the 1949 Agricultural Conservation Program, says _____, ACP committeeman in charge of range conservation work for _____ county.

Mr. _____ said the ACP program is set up to help ranchers get more from their range land, not less. Ranchers cooperating in the program believe that it is good business to reduce the number of livestock if too much of the feed on the range goes into maintaining numbers instead of putting on weight.

The experience of ranchers is supported by experimental results which show that when numbers of livestock are brought into balance with the amount of feed, the amount of meat produced is increased, even though it may mean a reduction in numbers.

Mr. _____ explained that "balance" means using the range so that it will continue to protect the soil from erosion and continue to produce palatable and nutritious feed year after year. In many instances this means leaving 50 percent of the plant growth above the ground to go to seed and to store plant food in the roots for vigorous growth the next year.

The chairman explains that an understanding of range conditions and key species of grass makes it possible for experienced ACP committeemen and ranchers to determine a fair balance of stocking -- the number of cattle or sheep that should be allowed to graze on a given area of range land for a given time.

Reseeding of range grasses, development of water holes for livestock, deferred grazing and other practices of the Agricultural Conservation Program all fit into the range improving and range maintaining effort, the chairman explains. Important byproducts are the protection of watershed, increasing water supplies and checking flood damage.

NEAR RECORD WHEAT CROP IN PROSPECT - The Nation's wheat farmers are expected to pour nearly 1,337 million bushels of wheat into the world breadbasket when harvesting of the 1949 crop is completed this fall.

This second largest total production in history -- only 2 percent below the record 1947 crop -- is forecast by the U. S. Department of Agriculture on the basis of conditions June 1. This is 15 million bushels more than estimated on May 1.

The increase is largely due to improved prospects in Nebraska, South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, New York, Colorado, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah and Oregon.

Winter wheat production, now indicated at 1,037 million bushels, is being grown on a record acreage, but is 3 percent below the record crop of 1947. It compares with the 1948 crop of 991 million bushels and the 1937-47 average of 726 million bushels.

More than 300 million bushels of spring wheat are in prospect as of June 1. Although only slightly more than the 1948 crop, this total exceeds the average by 13 percent.

Harvest has started on the relatively small barley acreage. Yields are satisfactory so far, and promising in the spring-sown area, indicating a total of 283 million bushels. Oats production from the larger than average acreage promises to approach 1.5 billion bushels. Rye will be harvested from the smallest acreage, except that of 1946, in 75 years, with an expected production of only 22 million bushels.

Hay yields are slightly above average and cutting of 101 million tons is indicated. Pastures are reported in well above average condition and uniformly good except in some dry areas in Florida, Montana and California.

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URGES GRASS IN PLACE OF SURPLUSES - Instead of piling up wasteful surpluses in cribs, bins, cellars or warehouses, why not store them in the soil? The question is asked by _____, chairman of the _____ county Agricultural

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Conservation Committee, who points out that crop reports now indicate that when the crops are harvested this fall there may be actual surpluses in a number of major crops.

And in most cases, the chairman said, there is no relief in turning to some other cash crop. Almost without exception a few acres shift by many farmers will result in surpluses of the other crops.

As the chairman explains, most farmers can't afford and it is not in the national interest to leave the land idle since it grows up to weeds and becomes a menace to the rest of the farm land. About the only alternative is to seed the land to adapted grasses and legumes, thus building up the soil for future production. And the grass that holds the soil and builds up humus, at the same time can furnish feed for the livestock and livestock products which are still needed.

Mr. _____ makes these observations in urging farmers to consider carefully the problems which may make adjustments necessary to keep agriculture "on an even keel." Too often, he explains, lower prices result in increased production of crops already in surplus in the effort to meet fixed costs. It results in a vicious circle of increased surpluses, lower prices and reduced income until the farmer is finally forced out. Production in line with consumer needs should be the goal instead of using up soil fertility, seed, fertilizers, labor and equipment to turn out excess food and fiber.

Through the Agricultural Conservation Program, the chairman explains, farmers may obtain assistance in seeding grasses and legumes and in obtaining lime, phosphate and potash to improve growing conditions for these conserving crops.

ACP AT UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE - Alvin V. McCormack, Director, Agricultural Conservation Programs Branch of PMA, has been invited to present a paper at the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources to be held at Lake Success, New York, August 17 to September 6, 1949. The paper is to deal with the economic evaluation of soil conservation with special reference to the costs and benefits for the individual farmer.

This invitation gives Mr. McCormack an opportunity to present a picture of the U.S. Agricultural Conservation Program to the scientists of most countries of the world. The paper will be translated into the various languages of those who will participate in the Conference.

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